

Medical Practice Questions

EDITOR'S NOTE: *From time to time medical practice questions of general interest are referred to the Scientific Board by the Peer Review Commission of the California Medical Association. Each is sent to members of the appropriate Scientific Advisory Panel.* Their responses are collated, reviewed and then submitted to the Peer Review Commission as the Scientific Board's opinion on the scientific and practice aspects of the question. The Commission adds suggestions to assist peer review units and authorizes publication.*

These opinions and positions are informational only and are not intended to be used as instructions, directives or policy statements. The appropriateness of care in individual cases should not be determined by these answers, but should be reviewed by local peer review committees.

Questions and reprint requests may be submitted to the Medical Practice Questions Committee, Peer Review Commission, California Medical Association, 731 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94103.

Fundusphoto Camera

QUESTION:

Is the use of a fundusphoto camera considered accepted medical practice for diagnosis and follow-up in diabetic and hypertensive patients? (Asked by Keith E. Vincent, MD, Vallejo, California)

OPINION:

In the opinion of the Advisory Panels on General and Family Practice, Internal Medicine and Ophthalmology, fundus photography can be valuable in the diagnosis and follow-up of patients with diabetic or hypertensive retinopathy. The fundus photos are usually evaluated in conjunction with fluorescein angiography. The value of the findings rests on their interpretation by an appropriately trained person, most often an ophthalmologist.

Hysterosalpingography

QUESTION:

What are the medical indications for carrying out hysterosalpingography? (Asked by Blue Shield of California)

OPINION:

In the opinion of the Advisory Panels on Obstetrics/Gynecology and Radiology, the following may be indications for hysterosalpingography: determination of tubal patency, tubal abnormality or abnormality of the uterine cavity; as part of sterility evaluation or after salpingoplasty or pre-

myomectomy or postmyomectomy; to determine intrauterine polyps, endometrial or pelvic masses, incompetent cervix or abdominal pregnancy; to locate a "lost" intrauterine device; to evaluate caesarean section or myomectomy scarring; as part of the diagnostic workup for abnormal uterine bleeding, habitual abortion, repeated pelvic infections, dysmenorrhea, amenorrhea or Asherman's syndrome; to evaluate known renal anomaly or ambiguous external genitalia; or as an adjunct in the diagnosis of unexplained pelvic pain.

Photomotogram (Achilles Reflex Test)

QUESTION:

(1) Is use of a photomotogram (Achilles reflex test) accepted medical practice as an initial test of thyroid function? (2) Is a photomotogram accepted medical practice when used with other thyroid tests? (3) Are periodic photomotograms used to follow the results of therapy accepted practice? (Asked by San Diego Foundation for Medical Care)

OPINION:

In the opinion of the Advisory Panel on Internal Medicine, the photomotogram, while not unacceptable medical practice, has been generally replaced by more sensitive chemical tests. It is no longer widely used as an initial test of thyroid function, or to follow periodically the results of therapy. Panel members felt that use of the photomotogram would be justified in certain circumstances when other tests are not available; and that it may occasionally provide useful information when used in conjunction with other thyroid tests.

*The Scientific Board of the California Medical Association has a Scientific Advisory Panel for each of 23 recognized specialties of medical practice. Each Advisory Panel includes representation from the appropriate department of each of the eight medical schools in California, representatives of specialty societies in the field and representatives from the Specialty Sections of the Association. The Advisory Panels are thus broadly and authoritatively based in both academia and practice.